

# Leadership and Resiliency Program

Brief Description | Recognition | Program IOM | Intervention Type | Content Focus  
Interventions by Domain | Key Program Approaches | Outcomes | Evaluation Design  
Delivery Specifications | Intended Setting | Fidelity | Barriers and Problems | Personnel  
Education | Personnel Training | Cost | Intended Age Group | Intended Population  
Gender Focus | Replications | Adaptations | Contact Information

*Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.*

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The Leadership and Resiliency Program (LRP) is a school and community-based program for high school students, 14 to 19 years of age, that enhances youths' internal strengths and resiliency while preventing involvement in substance use and violence. The program includes resiliency groups that are held during the school day, as well as alternative activities offered after school, on weekends, and during the summer. These include adventure/outdoor activities, working with abused and neglected animals, and performing puppet skits for young children. The alternative activities focus on community service, altruism, learning about managed risk, social skills improvement, and conflict resolution. The program operates year-round with increased alternative programming when school is not in session. Participants may stay involved with the program throughout their high school years.

## PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Leadership and Resiliency Program (LRP) is the result of grassroots advocacy for vital youth substance abuse prevention and youth development services. Local faith and community groups believed collaborative, cost-effective, and innovative programming was the best way to engage youth in positive activities and thus prevent substance use. These groups turned to Fairfax County (VA) Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) with their ideas. ADS prepared a successful grant proposal that funded the development of LRP.

The Washington-Baltimore HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy funded ADS to run LRP as a 3-year regional demonstration project. The University of Maryland provided research oversight. LRP continues to be funded and operated by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, a Fairfax County, Virginia agency, in cooperation with Fairfax County Public Schools.



## **RECOGNITION**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments: Best Practices in Science Based Programming

National Association of Counties: Achievement Award

Commonwealth of Virginia: Governor's Recognition

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors: Certificate of Recognition

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## **INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)**

SELECTIVE, INDICATED

Developed for use with selective and indicated audiences. The intended audience is students who have a combination of behavioral issues such as high absenteeism, high levels of disciplinary actions, low grades, and substance use and/or violence. Significant numbers of students present with emergent mental health disorders.

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## **INTERVENTION TYPE**

SCHOOL-BASED

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## **CONTENT FOCUS**

ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS, TOBACCO, VIOLENCE

Targets general substance use and abuse and violence.

### **Parent involvement as an adjunct strategy:**

While there are no specific interventions for parents, extensive communication occurs between program staff and parents on an ongoing basis, making parental involvement a natural outgrowth of the programming. Parents are also encouraged to become involved in some of the alternative activities.

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## **INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN**

INDIVIDUAL, PEER, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY

### **INDIVIDUAL**

- After-school alcohol, tobacco, and drug education/peer-led curricula
- Community service
- Life and social skills training

## PEER

- Alternative/recreational activities
- Peer-resistance education

## SCHOOL

- Classroom drug education
- Classroom-based skills development
- Mentoring/tutoring

## COMMUNITY

- Establishment of supervised youth recreational and cultural programs

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## KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES

AFTER-SCHOOL CURRICULA/ACTIVITIES; ALTERNATIVE/RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES; COMMUNITY SERVICE; INFORMATION SHARING; IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA, PEER LEADERSHIP, COUNSELING OR SUPPORT; PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL; SKILL DEVELOPMENT; OTHER: SKILL-BUILDING GROUPS

This program has four components: (1) adolescent group meetings for referred youth that utilize clinical resiliency programming; (2) community service with abused and neglected animals; (3) performance of puppet skits for young children, an activity that is heavily dependent upon cognitive dissonance; and (4) outdoor adventure programming that is progressively more intensive. Every component has been developed within a research framework to intensively support specific resiliency factors and to promote optimum adolescent development. For each component there is a curriculum that provides a program description, specific descriptions of several group activities, sample forms and releases, required supplies, and replication tips.

### AFTER-SCHOOL CURRICULA/ACTIVITIES

The community service and outdoor activities take place after school or in the summer.

### ALTERNATIVE/RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The outdoor adventure activities include camping, white-water canoeing and kayaking, rope courses and other challenge activities, hiking, and work with horses and other equines.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNITY SERVICE

The work with abused and neglected animals fosters the identity around a care-giving role, offering opportunities to minimize inappropriate boundaries while building healthy relationships with peers and adults. Student participants learn to model and then internalize healthy empathy and learn appropriate risk management. Activities include socialization and rehabilitation of a wide variety of animals and assistance in education campaigns and beautification projects. Students also participate in river clean-up activities.

## **INFORMATION SHARING/IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA**

The in-school groups focus on information sharing related to community resources and topics relevant to participants.

## **PEER LEADERSHIP, COUNSELING OR SUPPORT**

All activities include a focus on building participant leadership skills. Many activities include opportunities for peer leadership with the goal of attaining and internalizing these skills. Focus is also on peer problem-solving and support.

## **PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL**

Participants experiencing substance abuse, mental health, or other concerns requiring more intense clinical help are linked with services within the partner community agency.

## **SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

This program addresses skill and resiliency trait development. It teaches and encourages peer refusal skills, risk management, goal orientation, future-oriented thinking, optimism, empathy, internal locus of control, and conflict management.

## **OTHER: SKILL-BUILDING GROUPS**

Resiliency groups are held in school and are process focused. They include many expressive arts approaches, coupled with individual skill building in a group setting.

## **HOW IT WORKS**

The program is designed to—

- Increase students' perceptions of competence and self-worth
- Improve participant identification with positive roles
- Reduce disciplinary actions in school
- Improve participants' communication and refusal skills
- Increase knowledge of and negative attitudes about substance abuse and violence
- Increase community involvement in promoting the healthy development of youth and the valuing of adolescents

LRP requires a partnership between a high school and a substance abuse or health service agency. Schools work with agency personnel to identify program candidates and provide different types of support, as needed.

For best results, students should enter the program early in their high school career and participate until graduation. However, students may enter the program in any grade during high school. Participants attend weekly in-school resiliency groups lead by a facilitator (i.e., program leader) for the duration of the program. Additional individual or small group followup discussions between the facilitator and students may be held at other times during the week.

LRP students are expected to participate at least weekly in community service activities, which take place after school or on weekends. Core activities include:

- Animal Rehabilitation—LRP youth volunteer at a local rescue shelter for abused and neglected animals

- Community Beautification—participants clean area streams and plant trees to improve the environment
- Puppet Project—participants learn skits on relevant issues, such as family substance abuse and social skills development, and present them to elementary school students

LRP students are required to participate in animal rehabilitation activities at least once a month. Outdoor and adventure activities are also scheduled regularly and each participant is expected to attend at least five of these trips over the several years they are involved in the program. Longtime LRP students who exhibit increased maturity gain the opportunity to participate in the Puppet Project. Each group is expected to perform a puppet skit for elementary students at least once during their high school career (and preferably three times or more). The LRP students help to write the skits as well as perform them. All community service and adventure activities are conducted as a group and monitored or supervised by a LRP facilitator.

Cooperative agreements must be set up between the school where the program will be implemented and the substance abuse treatment or health service provider, as well as with humane foundations (i.e., animal shelters), contractors for outdoor activities, volunteer groups or businesses that can provide space for summer activities, and the elementary schools where the students will deliver their puppet projects. Ongoing communication to coordinate these activities also is needed. In terms of logistics and personnel, the school should commit—

- Dedicated space within the school for group activities.
- Access to school records.
- A guidance counselor or similar staff member to cofacilitate in-school groups.
- Transportation for participants to out-of-school activities.

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## **OUTCOMES**

### **REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS, IMPROVEMENTS IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS**

#### **REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS**

Up to 65% to 70% reduction in school behavioral incidents.

Program participants realized:

- 75% reduction in school suspensions.
- 47% reduction in juvenile arrests.

#### **IMPROVEMENTS IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS**

An increase of 0.8 in grade point average (GPA), based on a 4.0 scale.

Up to 60% to 70% increase in school attendance.

100% high school graduation rates.

Increased sense of school bonding.

Extremely high percentage of participants either become employed or pursue post-secondary education; 100% graduated.

## EVALUATION DESIGN

Pretest and posttest data were collected during the school year using the Gang Resistance and Education Training instrument developed for LRP. School records were used to track attendance, behavioral reports, and grade point averages. Anecdotal data was collected from youth, school personnel, parents, and press reports.

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## DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

### 1–3 YEARS

#### Amount of time required to deliver the program to obtain documented outcomes:

Program startup, which includes hiring and training staff—as well as identifying and establishing agreements and partnerships with schools, businesses, and off-site programming—can take up to 4 months. Implementation requires that youth participate in all three program components over the course of 5 months to 1 year for each of the 2 to 4 years they are in the program. (Four years of programming is possible for participants who enter LRP in their freshman year.)

For resiliency groups, 7 to 10 students meet in the school setting during school hours, 1 to 1.5 hours weekly, for the entire school year. Individual meetings or smaller group meetings may be held to meet more intensive needs. Students are encouraged to attend groups throughout their school career.

Work with abused and neglected animals occurs after school throughout the school year and during the summer at a local rehabilitation shelter for abused and neglected animals. Student groups no larger than eight individuals participate in shelter activities that usually last 3 to 6 hours.

The puppet show component is conducted at elementary schools during the school year during the school day. Practices for the puppet component usually last for a minimum of 8 weeks and occur during the school day.

Outdoor/adventure activities take place on weekends during the school year and during summer months. Students in outdoor activities participate in a continuum of activities over a multiyear period. Field trips take place throughout the year.

Transportation necessary for alternative/out-of-school activities must be provided for a successful implementation.

All after-school and alternative activities are followed by group sessions that relate the experience with targeted therapeutic issues and specific resiliency traits.

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## INTENDED SETTING

### RURAL, URBAN, SUBURBAN

This model is developed for use in multiple settings. Suburban and urban localities should plan on travel for activities taking place in rural environments, such as outdoor adventure activities.

## FIDELITY

Components the developer indicates must be included in order to achieve the outcomes cited in the Model Program:

Cooperative agreements should be set up between the implementing school and (1) a substance abuse prevention or health service provider (this may be waived if the school itself will be implementing the program), (2) a humane organization, animal rescue group, or animal shelter, (3) providers of outdoor activities, (4) businesses or volunteer groups that can provide space for summer activities, and (5) elementary schools where students will deliver puppet projects.

Organizations implementing this model should be aware of the risks related to the alternative activities required by this program, including risks related to youth working with animals, white-water activities, camping, and rope course activities.

Schools should commit dedicated space within the school for group activities and provide access to school records for evaluation purposes. Schools must dedicate a guidance counselor, school social worker, or psychologist to partner with resiliency staff. Schools implementing this program should provide two clinical staff members as group coleaders.

Significant travel is often necessary for alternative activities, and transportation to all out-of-school activities should be provided for successful implementation of this program.

Staff should include program leaders to work with caseloads of up to 50 youth per staff, and a program supervisor or manager.

Training in program implementation is required, and a licensing agreement must be purchased in order to implement LRP.

The start-up period for the program is generally 4 months.

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## BARRIERS AND PROBLEMS

**Potential problem:** Agencies seeking to partner with schools may experience difficulties in implementing clinical resiliency groups within the school day.

**Proposed solution:** Schools need to have high-level administrative support for programming to be implemented as required. Leadership figures in the schools need to set clear expectations with staff. Outside counselors should make significant efforts to reach out to instructional staff, establishing warm and trusting work relationships. The strong academic improvements experienced by students historically have been very convincing to staff members.

**Potential problem:** Finding space in which to conduct resiliency groups.

**Proposed solution:** All parties need to show flexibility. Space is needed to conduct confidential groups for students. However, this space does not have to be an office. Classrooms or empty storage rooms have been successfully utilized.

**Potential problem:** Finding a good animal program partner.

**Proposed solution:** Partnerships need to be formed with great care. Staff members need to

be given the time to establish trusting relationships with animal program partners. Meetings between animal program groups and clinical staff should be held regularly, with avenues of communication clearly understood by all. Good relationships between program partners are critical for modeling effective relationships and communication for youth participants.

**Potential problem:** Access to transportation.

**Proposed solution:** It is imperative that transportation is available for trips to animal-related activities and outdoor activities. Organizations should have dedicated vehicles for this program. If none are available within the agency, grants should be written to cover this aspect of implementation.

**Potential problem:** Funds for snacks, incentives, and alternative activities.

**Proposed solution:** Planning for sustainability should occur during initial development. After startup and staff costs, ongoing expenses are for snacks, incentives, and activities.

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## **PERSONNEL**

### **FULL TIME, PART TIME, PAID, VOLUNTEER**

All staff working with this program are full-time, paid prevention specialists and school counselors. Volunteers have been utilized for out-of-school programming when accompanied by LRP staff. Contracts are developed for some of the alternative programming such as kayaking or other adventure programs.

Staff need to have a high tolerance for stress, high energy levels, the ability to take risks, and the strong desire and ability to work with youth in multiple settings. Staff members are expected to take part in and provide services while participating in and leading a wide variety of alternative activities, including white-water sports and animal program activities.

### **Typical personnel problems encountered by users when implementing this Model Program:**

Personnel problems have not been experienced when the above criteria are met. Work hours vary with activities.

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## **EDUCATION**

### **GRADUATE**

#### **Program Supervisor/Manager:**

An experienced clinician with a master's degree in counseling, social work, psychology, or a related field is preferable. This individual should have skills in clinical supervision, proposal writing, grant writing, media relations, and fund raising and the ability to build relationships with youth, families, systems, and bureaucracies. The manager performs limited clinical work, provides clinical and direct staff supervision, and handles project management, partnership development, data collection, and outcome analysis.



### Program Leaders:

Work directly with students and manage caseloads of up to 50 youth per staff, fully implementing every aspect of programming. They establish and maintain school partnerships, facilitate group meetings, screen youth for program inclusion, provide crisis intervention, and conduct data collection. Program leaders should have significant experience working with youth and a minimum of a master's degree in a human service field.

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## PERSONNEL TRAINING

Type: SEMINAR/WORKSHOP, Location: ONSITE (user)/OFFSITE (developer or trainer location), Length: BASIC (4 to 5 days)/ANNUAL BOOSTER (is offered)

Training is required for implementation of this model. A 4-day training is mandatory. This training is partially didactic and highly experiential. At least 1 day will involve alternative activities requiring personal risk, such as white-water activities or ropes course activities, dependent upon each site. Annual booster training is offered but not required.

Users can negotiate to have training delivered at multiple locations. Quarterly offsite training is offered. Onsite training requires as much notice as possible to ensure availability. Various replication materials are included with training and are not available for separate purchase.

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## COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$5,001–\$10,000

Cost considerations for implementing this program as recommended by the developer:

### Consultation and information:

Initial consultation by phone or e-mail . . . . .	Free, up to 1/2 hour
Additional quarter hour program information/consultation . . . . .	\$25 per quarter hour or \$100 per hour

### MATERIALS

Manual and implementation license . . . . .	\$150
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### TRAINING

4 to 5 days at \$800 per day . . . . .	\$3,200 to \$4,000 plus lodging, transportation, and meals.
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In addition, each group or organization will need to work with LRP training staff to coordinate alternative activity training site and equipment use.

### Program supplies:

Required supplies are discussed at the end of each component curriculum; i.e., for the animal rehabilitation program the following supplies are needed: transportation, food and bottled water, sunscreen and insect repellent, spare clothing, treats for animals, and cameras with film and developing services.

## **INTENDED AGE GROUP**

EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14), TEENAGER (15–17), YOUNG ADULT (18–24)

This program focuses on high school youth 14 to 19 years of age. If youth receive specialized student services allowing them to remain in school until age 21, they continue to be eligible. The program is currently being piloted at middle and elementary schools.

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## **INTENDED POPULATION**

MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS

Participants in this program have been from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It is imperative to focus on cultural competence and activities that honor participants' diverse backgrounds.

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## **GENDER FOCUS**

BOTH GENDERS

Developed for use with both male and female youth.

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## **REPLICATIONS**

Danville, VA is replicating the LRP program and has a preliminary outcome of a 0.5 GPA increase.

Contact: Jennifer Smith, Danville Community Services Board, (434) 799-0897.

**Additional intervention sites:**

Fairfax County, VA, is adapting the Model Program for middle and elementary school populations.

**Other features of the Model Program that were altered or affected by the replication:**

Fairfax County has added the Universal IOM category at the middle school level.

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## **ADAPTATIONS**

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

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## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**ABOUT THE DEVELOPER**

The Leadership and Resiliency Program was developed by Amrit Daryanani with support from Alcohol and Drug Services in collaboration with the Fairfax County Public Schools. Alcohol and Drug Services of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board is an agency of the

Fairfax County Government, serving the county of Fairfax (VA) and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church with comprehensive mental health, substance abuse, and mental retardation services.

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